

## BUTT ROT OF PALMS IN FLORIDA

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Butt rot of palms is caused by the fungus *Ganoderma sulcatum* (Leup.) Karst (*G. sulcatum* Murr.). This disease has been found on the following palm species in Florida: Queen Palm, *Arecastrum romanzoffianum* (Cham.) Becc.; Arikury Palm, *Arikuryroba schizophylla* (Mart.) L. H. Bailey; Blue-green Palm *Butia capitata* (Martius) Beccari; Coconut, *Cocos nucifera* L.; Canary Island Date Palm, *Phoenix canariensis* Chab.; Senegal, *Phoenix reclinata* Jacq.; Saw Palmetto, *Serenoa repens* (Bart.) Small; and Cabbage Palm, *Sabal palmetto* (Walt.) Lodd.

### DISTRIBUTION

Butt rot of palm has been reported in India, Burma, Malaya, West Indies, and the state of Florida. The distribution of the fungus in Florida, according to specimens submitted to the Division of Plant Industry, Plant Pathology Laboratory, by counties is as follows: Alachua, Brevard, Dade, Hillsborough, Lake, Orange, Pinellas, Polk, Sarasota, and Volusia (Fig. 1). This distribution is likely to extend to other areas where susceptible palm hosts are grown.

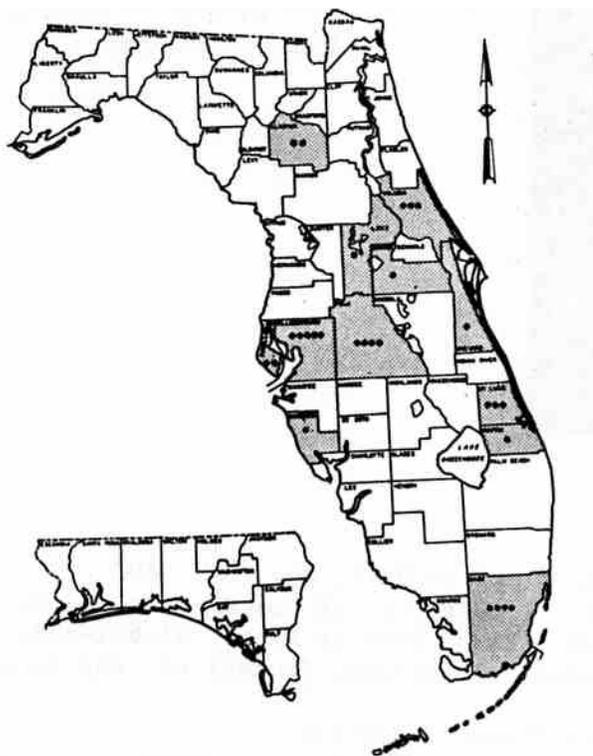


Fig. 1. Known distribution of *Ganoderma sulcatum* in Florida on palms.

- Butt rot, *Ganoderma sulcatum*, known to be present in these counties.
- Number of specimens submitted.

### SYMPTOMATOLOGY

Early symptoms are evidenced by loss of vigor of the affected palm. The lower fronds turn yellow and die. As the disease progresses, shelving sporophores may be seen growing on the trunk or surface roots, usually near soil

line (Fig. 2). The sporophores, also referred to as conks, have a brownish to reddish, dull to shiny lacquer-like upper surface with point of attachment lacking a stalk (sessil).

#### CONTROL

Prevention should be emphasized in attempting to control this disease. The fungus is already well established in the plant by the time first symptoms are observed. Since the fungus is a wound parasite, special care should be taken to prevent damage to the base of the palm trunk. In the event that such damage does occur, however, a copper fungicide may be applied as a preventive control. Palms should be planted on well-drained sites, and over-shading of trunks with nearby shrubbery should be avoided.



Fig. 2. Sporophores of Ganoderma sulcatum.

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